



City Council Activity Report February-March 2011

Councilors

Vaughn D. Spencer, President of Council

Francis Acosta, City Council District 1

Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz, City Council District 2

Dennis Sterner, City Council District 3

Stratton Marmarou, City Council District 4

Donna Reed, City Council District 5

Jeffrey Waltman, City Council District 6

Topics under Discussion and Consideration

City Business

- Enacted an ordinance containing the Access Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with Exide Technologies that will allow the **remediation of Bernhart's Park** to begin. This park has been closed to the public since 1996 due to the high levels of lead contamination. Remediation work is expected to be completed by the end of summer 2011 and Exide will sponsor a grand reopening in spring 2012.
- Amended the **Citizens Advisory Board (CAB)**. Council and the Mayor recently agreed to expand the CAB to a 21 member board composed on 14 individuals selected by the members of Council and seven (7) to be designated by the Mayor. The CAB will have quarterly meetings regarding the implementation of the Recovery Plan. Council and the Mayor are in the process of identifying members.
- With the release of the 2010 Census, Council is required to undertake an examination of the Council Districts to find if population shifts will require adjustments to the district lines. The Administrative Code requires Council to establish as ad hoc **Redistricting Advisory Committee** to assist with this process. The Committee will have one member appointed from each Council District and one member appointed at large. The Committee will be assisted by two (2) members of the City Planning Commission and technical support will be provided by a member of the Berks County Planning Department. Council has asked the Legislative Aide Committee to oversee this process. Council is currently seeking members for the Committee.

- Representatives of City Council, the Mayor's Office and Reading School District are currently exploring the creation of a **Recreation Commission** to run the City's recreation programs. A similar and successful model is used in Lancaster.
- Council members asking the Administration and the County Treasurer to reconsider their position on discontinuing payment plans for city property taxes.
- **City Council finalized and introduced the Financial Policies Ordinance.** The draft policies were prepared by PFM, Act 47 Coordinator.
- City Council is considering a proposal from the Housing Authority to rename Avenue A after the late Senator Mike O'Pake.
- **Council President, Council Vice-President and City Clerk** attend bimonthly meetings with the Act 47 Coordinator and Administration to discuss and review the implementation of the Act 47 initiatives.

Legislation under Consideration

- **Ordinance** - amending the City of Reading Codified Ordinances Chapter 1 Administration and Government, §1-186. Fiscal Provisions, Parts 2 and 3 by replacing the terms Finance Director and Finance Department with Director of Administrative Services and Department of Administrative Services and amending language regarding Fund Transfers and Inter-fund Borrowing **(Council Staff & PFM)**
- **Ordinance** - establishing a four-way stop intersection at N. 13th St and Richmond St in the City of Reading, Pennsylvania **(Public Works) Introduced at the Jan 10 regular meeting**
- **Ordinance** - establishing a four-way stop intersection at North 13th Street and Elm Street in the City of Reading, Pennsylvania **(Law/Public Works) Introduced at the Jan 10 regular meeting**
- **Ordinance** - changing the topographical map of the City of Reading to reflect the street name change from Avenue A to Senator O'Pake Avenue **(Council Staff/Law) Introduced at the Feb 28 regular meeting; Town Meeting schedule April 7**

Legislation Adopted

Bill No. 6-2011 - that the City of Reading hereby adopts the provisions set forth in Pennsylvania Statutes 21 P.S. Sect. 611 to and including 21 P.S. Sect. 615 regarding falsely advertising properties **(Law) Introduced at the Jan 24 regular meeting; Enacted Feb 14th**

Bill No. 8-2011 - amending the City of Reading Zoning Ordinance codified as Chapter 27 of the City of Reading ordinances to correct typographical errors, adjust and clarify the zoning ordinance adopted July 2010 and to establish requirements for nonconforming use, permit auto repair and car washes as a permitted by right use in the manufacturing-commercial zoning district, to reduce the maximum square foot of a garage /carport in the r-1a zoning district to 600 square feet, to increase the maximum square footage of a garage/carport in a r-1 zoning district to 600 square feet, establish additional requirements for newly built or placed dwelling unit in r-1 zoning district, provide for a maximum percentage of land for parking in front yard in r-2 zoning district, amend hours of operation for a social club as well as establish minimum lot area, provide maximum number of children in a day

care home with lot size of less than 2500 square feet, add laundromats and personal service businesses by right in c-h zoning district, establish access requirements for multiple occupancy building, limit yard sales to four times per year per lot and two days, authorize council to make modifications of listed requirements through conditional use process, add requirements for operation of a day care, clarify measurements for fence and wall construction, limiting two access driveways, require minimum of five parking spaces for restaurants, taverns and nightclubs, and add definitions **(Law) Introduced at the 12/27/10 regular meeting; Advertised December 27, 2010 and January 3, January 12 and January 18, 2011; Public hearing held Jan 26; Re-advertised February 4, 2011, Enacted Feb 14th**

Bill No. 11-2011 - amending the Quality of Life Violation Ticket Process by amending Chapter 5 – Code Enforcement of the City of Reading Codified Ordinances Part 14 by adding Sections 112 Collections and 113 Liens and renumbering Sections 112 and 113 to 114 and 115 Nonexclusive Remedies and Severability **(Law) Introduced at the Feb 14 regular meeting**

Bill No. 14-2011 - amending the City of Reading Organizational Chart as follows: Transferring the Property Maintenance Division from the Police Department to the Department of Community Development **(Man Dir) Introduced at the Feb 14 regular meeting**

Resolution – approving the Tax Collection Agreement between the City of Reading and the County of Berks **(Solicitor)**

Resolution – confirming the appointment of John Nagel as Administrative Services Director of the City of Reading **(Man Dir)**

Bill No. 15-2011 - amending the City of Reading Codified Ordinances Chapter 1 Administration & Government, Part 11 Initiative and Referendum Section 1-1105 Form and Content in accordance with the Order from the Charter Board dated February 2011 **(Council Staff/Law) Introduced at the March 14 regular meeting**

Bill No. 16-2011 - authorizing the Mayor to execute an access agreement, which includes a memorandum of understanding, between the City of Reading and Exide Technologies, thereby giving Exide Technologies permission to enter onto property known as Bernhart Park located along Spring Valley Road in Muhlenberg Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, (“the site”), and described more fully below, to perform work to remediate the Park as negotiated by the City of Reading and Exide Technologies as a result of the United States Department of Environmental Protection Agency’s (USEPA) administrative order of consent (USEPA docket number rcra-iii-3-2000-002th) as well as to execute the memorandum of understanding which addresses the scope of work items negotiated with the City of Reading regarding the site that were not mandated by the USEPA nor included as part of the revised work plan, as described more fully below **(Council Staff/Law) Introduced at the March 14 regular meeting**

Resolutions - making 10 appointments and/or reappointments to the City’s Boards, Authorities and Commissions. (Council Staff)

Committee Discussion Topics

The President of Council serves as an ad hoc member of all committees

Finance Committee (Acosta, Chair; Waltman; Reed):

- Review February and March **Cash Flow and Finance Reports**
- Receive update - Collection Report for **Delinquent Taxes and Misc Fines & Fees** (RE01) & developing strategy to improve **collection of EIT and Per Capita taxes**
- Review Act 47 Recovery Plan – **Progress on Act 47 Initiatives**
- Review CD Report re Un-programmed CDBG Funds; Closing out unpaid CD Loans (CD02)
- Review **2 011 Budget Follow Up Items** re Explore outsourcing additional tax billing and collection areas and PILOT - develop approach to increase PILOTs from non-profits
- Begin discussing options re **Cable Channels Assigned under Franchise Agreement**

Public Safety Committee (Stern, Chair; Goodman-Hinnershitz, Waltman):

- Review **transfer of Codes to CD Department**
- Receiving an update of the implementation of **Quality of Life Ticketing**.
- Receive update on **the Citizens Services Center**
- Receive update on City's preparedness re **FEMA and COOP**
- Review progress on **revisions to housing permit application process and zoning backlog**

Public Works Committee (Goodman-Hinnershitz, Chair; Reed, Marmarou)

- Reviewing legislation and **traffic studies for traffic signals and changes** proposed by the Administration.
- Review and discuss an MOU for **PermaCultivate**, a non-profit agency focused on urban greening and sustainability issues, who desires to operate from the City Greenhouse in City Park.
- Review **lease agreements** with organizations that use City facilities.
- Receive update on the start of the Recreation Commission
- Review proposal from Olivets for Rec Center in Pendora Park

Administrative Oversight Committee (Marmarou, Chair; Reed, Acosta):

- **Boards, Authorities & Commissions** – conducted 13 appointment and reappointment interviews and recommended 10 appointment and reappointment actions, where applicable, to the body of Council.

Hearings & Meetings Held

- Tax Exoneration Hearing re 601 Centre Ave, Iglesia de Dias Penecostal, Victor Robles applicant
- Safety at Schools Meeting with representatives from Reading School District
- Rec Commission Study Group meetings
- Town Meeting re future of Pendor Park